

Civil-military relations in Malawi: An historical perspective

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Introduction

The discourse on civil-military relations in Malawi has gained prominence in the last decade. This is due to the changing global geostrategic environment at the end of the cold war and the advent of political pluralism on the African continent and in Malawi.

Discussion of civil-military relations in Malawi will begin by examining the formation of the modern Malawian state on the ruins of the Maravi Kingdom. The construction of the current Malawian State, based on the Westphalian European Model with its attendant institutions of the military, Parliament and other governmental structures, is a continuation of a state configured as a colony for the benefit of the colonial power. The evolution of civil-military relations therefore reflected the consolidation of the European colonial experiment and its disengagement from Africa and the bi-polarity that characterized international relations from 1945.

During these phases there have been different incarnations of political communities, accountability and civil society that have had an impact on civil-military relations well into the post-colonial Malawian State. The Malawian military has been both a positive agent for social transformation and an instrument of conquest, humiliation and repression.

The creation of the Malawi Young Pioneers in post-colonial Malawi introduced a new dimension in civil-military relations in Malawi. Originally configured primarily to spearhead agricultural development and secondly as an instrument for popular political participation and representation, the Young Pioneers became an instrument of political control and social militarisation.

Civil military relations in the pre-colonial period

Civil-military relations in the pre-colonial period were determined by the social order of the various societies. In the pre-colonial kingdom of Malawi, which covered much of modern day Malawi, individuals in society had rights, duties and obligations. The pre-colonial social order favoured the community over the individual and saw the world as an interconnected whole rather than the sum of a number of discrete components. There was interpenetration between the religious, social and political realms.

The political system of Maravi was a hereditary monarchy and leaders or chiefs were not accountable to their subjects. Maravi spiritual tradition held

that the boundaries between this life and the next were fluid and so both the leaders and their subjects were accountable to their gods and ancestral spirits. There was a non-statutory military force that undertook the political duty of settling disputes among subordinates and the social duty of ensuring safety of life and property. Civil-military relations existed in the traditional model where executive bodies had oversight of the traditional fighters. Decentralised command was the norm. Constantly shifting alliances formed the strength and weakness of civil-military relations during the pre-colonial era.

The Maravi kingdom suffered a series of penetrations and conquests that led to its collapse. The first to infiltrate the kingdom were the Portuguese, followed by the Arab slave traders, the Yaos and finally the Ngonis, who acted not only as a force of conquest but also as one of social transformation. As successive conquerors imposed elements of their own cultures onto the established social order, Maravi society became an amalgam of several value systems.

Christianity

The arrival of Christian missionaries in the 1850's led to a significant rupture of the traditional social order. The missionaries were the first Europeans to live among Africans and they sought to draw Africans from their traditional religious ways of life to Christianity. The missionaries had no respect for African society—seeing it as primitive—and they engaged in wholesale disruption of traditional ways of life. Existing authorities were challenged and discredited, political beliefs shaken and the social fabric put under strain. Additionally, Christianity provided an alternative community for marginalised members of African society, who then began to oppose the dominant social order. Civil society was reconstituted under the influence of Christianity and the civil society bred and nurtured by the missionaries became the engine for the subsequent transformation of society.

Planters and traders accompanied the Scottish missionaries who led the missionary work in Malawi. They pressurized the British Government to assume a more active role in protecting their commercial interests from high Portuguese taxes and Arab slave traders in the Nyasa Region. This was the origin of colonialism in Malawi.

Colonialism

Military confrontations between the British, the Portuguese and local chiefs in the Lower Shire area accelerated the imposition of protectorate status on the Nyasaland Districts, as the area was called before 1891. In June 1890, Sir Harry Johnston became the first commissioner and administrator of the area. He rec-

ommended to the British Government that they declare the area a protectorate and form an administration that included an armed force. The British authorities agreed. In 1891 an Anglo-Portuguese treaty demarcated the boundaries of the Nyasaland Districts and they were renamed British Central Africa. The same year, Johnston brought in 40 Nazbi Sikhs and 30 Muslim cavalry volunteers from the Indian Army. They formed a military force known as the British Central Africa Regiment¹, with Johnston as commander in chief. The regiment was renamed the Central African Rifles in 1898, the Central African Regiment in 1900 and the Kings African Rifles (KAR) in 1902.

Between 1891 and 1898 the Nyasaland colonial force undertook what they called ‘campaigns of pacification’—a euphemism for wars of conquest against the established traditional social and political order. Beginning with chief Chikumbu of Mulanje, successive chiefs were attacked, put to flight, exiled, imprisoned or executed. Among the chiefs executed were Chief Mponda in 1891, Gomani in 1896 and Bibi Kulunda in 1898. Mwase committed suicide to avoid capture. Other chiefs accepted subordination and became loyal supporters of colonialism, notably chiefs Kawinga and Liwonde of Machinga District.

The colonial state was set up to establish imperial sovereignty, to legitimate British rule and to ensure the compliance of the indigenous population with minimum force and costs, in order to exploit resources and continue the ‘civilisation’ of traditional societies in the colonial image. The colonial state sought collaboration from indigenous citizens because it was cheaper than governing by force. Ultimately the colonial administration attempted to invent a new political community.

Johnston outlined the motivation behind the employment of the armed forces during the wars of pacification between 1890 and 1900 when he said:

“A few ignorant [people][...]still cherish the notion that it is kindest and best to leave the uncivilised and the savage to wallow in their half animal existence[...]We must, if I may thus put it, educate the Negro by Force if necessary, leaving him to thank us afterwards.”

The Inspector General of the British Overseas Force echoed these views in 1911 when he said, ‘For years to come it is by the sword and the rifle alone that the white man must retain his hold on the country.’²

Force was used as much between colonial collaborators and anti-colonial Africans as between colonial armed forces and the traditional African or Arab opposition. Civil-military relations in the colonial system were characterised by interpenetration to ensure co-ordinated policy formulation. There was also interpenetration between the colonial territorial forces and the imperial forces to ensure that colonial policies were not in contradiction with imperial policies.

The Nyasaland force was designed to perform both policing and military roles. It was mainly conceived for internal security tasks in the wars of pacifi-

cation against dissenting traditional rulers although it later assumed defensive functions. According to Johnston, its role was to ensure protection of European life and property, abolition of the slave trade, clearance and control of strategic routes, elimination of threats from other colonial powers and extension of areas of British influence. The colonial forces were therefore designed to be an instrument of both imperial and colonial rule.

During the first decade of colonial rule, between 1890 and about 1900, Christianity was the only significant voice for the Africans in the same way that it had once been the centre of opposition to traditional authority. Johnston was so concerned about the Christian missionaries that he set up a commission of inquiry to probe the activities of one Rev. David Scott. In the previous quotation the 'few ignorant [people]' referred to Christian missionaries, whom he saw as the opposition.

In the course of seizing land claimed by the colonial power soldiers arrested and raped people, looted and burned houses and granaries and destroyed crops and African enterprises. The soldiers helped discipline workers on European-owned estates, and enforced racial segregation to perpetuate the inferior position of the indigenous Africans.

From the institution of colonial governance in the 1890's up until 1907, there were no legislative and executive bodies to pass laws and discharge executive functions. The first Legislative and Executive Councils were set up in 1907 when the territory was renamed Nyasaland.³ This happened in response to pressure from the planters, traders and missionaries who together formed the colonial political community. The Executive Council consisted of the Governor, the Deputy Governor, the Financial Secretary and the Attorney General. The Legislative Council consisted of all members of the Executive Council and three non-government members nominated by the government but approved by the colonial secretary. These usually included one missionary—who represented the Africans—a planter and a commercial manager.

The Legislative Council derived its legitimacy from the colonial system. Civil-military relations were institutionalised through the Governor who was the also commander in chief of the armed forces. The demographic stratification was characterised by an officer corps composed solely of white and Indian officers with African soldiers in the ranks. Recruitment patterns across the Nyasaland colony and the formation of tribal sub-units within the battalions were designed to enhance tribal rivalry with the white officers as the only unifying factor.

The First World War

During the First World War fighting spread to East Africa and Africans were exposed to European warfare. There was forced recruitment in the colonies for the British Army and, where Africans resisted recruitment the authorities resort-

ed to recruiting in a 'slave raiding' fashion. Would be recruiters were led into villages at night where they captured men. These people were much feared and became known as Ching'ani-ng'ani (Thunderstorm).⁴ At this time there was an increase in tax defaulting and the military would often seize the wife of a defaulter who would be released only after the man surrendered. This practice was detested.

These recruitment activities were so unpopular that some recruiting agents, especially the chiefs, had their houses attacked and burnt. The chiefs, who had been forced into co-operating with the colonial administration, were instructed that unless they obliged their subjects to volunteer, their relatives would be recruited. The most notable resistance to recruitment was the uprising led by Bishop John Chilembwe in 1915, himself a product of the co-operative interface between missionaries and Africans. Soldiers from Chiradzulu, Chilembwe's home, were reluctant to put down the rebellion. This is the first case of disobedience in the army, and a clear example of a rupture in civil-military relations.

Recruitment for soldiers to fight in the First World War had a profound effect on the African societies of Nyasaland. People's lives were once again disrupted as they attempted to avoid capture and irreversible divisions were created between the chiefs and their subjects.

Further disruption occurred when, in the course of the war, the sons of poor subjects became empowered through their interaction with white people. After the war the returning ex-servicemen, flush with new experience, were feared and looked up to by other villagers. The chiefs' power was eroded and some sought support from the colonial government in regaining control. Others attempted to make alliances with the war veterans. These formerly poor villagers, whose earnings in the war had allowed them to acquire livestock, were able to pay high bride prices to marry the daughters of chiefs. Thus military service and its attendant patterns of wealth creation and transference represented a break with the past.

The end of the Great War was also characterised by the creation and proliferation of native associations.⁵ Such associations as the North Nyasa Native Association of 1920 and the Nyasaland (Southern province) Native Association in 1923 were voices of civil society. Their primary post-war concerns were to gain death benefits for the families of deceased Askaris and to achieve the discontinuation of repressive colonial policies. There was also a renewed interest in Islam at the time. Overall, the war years consolidated resistance to European rule, lessened fears for the future and brought Malawians closer to the European concept of modernity.

The changing defence concept: 1920 to 1940

I have examined the development of resentment to European rule that came about during the great war. These sentiments induced the colonial power to move towards the creation of an entirely non-native military in order to optimise security for settlers. In 1922 the Governor, with the consent of the Legislative Council, enacted the Defence Force Ordinance that provided for the organisation of non-native inhabitants of Nyasaland into a defence force and a territorial force. Civil-military structures mirrored those of the KAR. The Governor of Nyasaland was the supreme commander of the force and a Central Defence Committee, chaired by the Chief Secretary, was established as an oversight body. The Governor determined the composition of the committee.

The Nyasaland territory was divided into military districts that coincided with the administrative districts. Each district had a Local Defence Committee chaired by a District Commandant. Other members of the committee were the sub-district commander and the officers of the territorial force.

In 1936 the Central Defence Committee at national level was reconstituted. The Governor was appointed Chairman and other members were the Chief Secretary, the Director of Medical Services, the Director of Police, the Chief Transport Officer and Registrar of Aircraft, the Postmaster General, the Provincial Commissioners, the Officer Commanding 2nd Battalion KAR, the Deputy Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster General and a Secretary. The officer commanding the troops was the chief military advisor to the Governor. By this time, the Nyasaland Battalion of the KAR and the East African Battalion had been organised into a single force of two brigades. The Northern brigade served East Africa and the Southern Brigade was quartered in Zomba.

The Second World War

The Second World War of 1939-1945, just like the first, saw the involvement of Malawian soldiers in a European war. The soldiers were deployed in East Africa against the Italians, in Somalia and on the Indian sub-continent against the Japanese. As in the case of the First World War this war provided Malawian soldiers with some rudimentary education and cursory exposure to other cultures. When they returned home the experience of these soldiers provided the intellectual basis for nationalist agitation for political independence.

In 1940 the Defence Force Ordinance replaced the Territorial Force with a system of conscription. Military service was compulsory for all male British Subjects between the ages of 18 and 60. This could have been motivated by the fact the involvement of Malawian troops outside Africa had weakened the military domestically.

At the same time, the Governor placed the Nyasaland Defence Force under

local military authority.⁶ The Governor did not want to be directly responsible for using Nyasaland government resources to fund the war, a responsibility of the Colonial and Foreign Office in London. The Nyasaland Government appeared indifferent to the running of the Nyasaland Defence Force and relations between the Governor and the Defence Force reflected the Governor's lack of direct control during the war as well as his growing disinterest in the defence force in favour of the Police Force, which had been formed in 1922. In a minute to Brigadier G. Davies, the Southern Brigade commander, on 21 July 1941 the Governor wrote.

“The local military authorities agree with me that the use of untrained or semi-trained volunteer forces on the suppression of internal disorder should be avoided. It is primarily the duty of the Police Force, with fully trained, highly disciplined military forces in reserve to be called upon in the event of need.”

Civil-military relations during the Federation

Civil-military relations remained fairly stable during the colonial period despite the outbreak of two world wars and the changing domestic security environment. However, the formation of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and the creation of two governments led to major upheavals. In 1953 the Federal Legislative Council consisted of 35 members, 26 of whom were elected by Europeans—including two Africans—and nine of whom were non-elected members—including six Africans appointed to represent African interests.⁷ In 1957 the Federal constitution stipulated a legislative council based on two voter rolls—an upper and a lower roll. The creation of upper and lower voter's rolls was a recognition of the social stratification of the Malawi political community. The qualifications for the higher roll voters were based on education, income and property. The general requirement for all voters was that they had to be literate in English and have an income of over 120 pounds per annum and be able to provide evidence of tax payment over the past 10 years. The upper roll voters' qualification was a minimum university degree and income in excess of 720 pounds per annum.

The federation was set up after the Second World War had impoverished Britain and weakened her capacity to maintain the empire.⁸ Post-war British colonial policy required that colonies be autonomous. Governors were given specific instructions to raise adequate taxes to run the territory and to maintain law and order. Nyasaland was considered unviable economically and it was decided that it would be less of a liability in a federal arrangement.

During the federation period elections—in which only whites could vote—there was a clampdown of preventive detentions; Christian charity co-existed

with capitalist greed; the language of freedom co-existed with the practice of repression; the notion of equality co-existed with the politics of racism; the politics of tribe co-existed with a centralized system of government. The instruments of state policy were the military and the police, the former consisting of the Nyasaland Defence Force and the Federal Army. It was this oppression and abuse throughout the colonial period that fed the African desire to form their own political organisations.

The political movements in Malawi were born out of native associations that emerged between 1912 and 1930. Among the more prominent were the Southern Province Native Association, the Central Province Native Association and the Representative Committee of the Northern Province Native Associations. The last one formed in 1924 in Zomba was the forerunner of the Nyasaland African Congress formed in 1944.⁹

The events that set in motion the constitutional transition from the colonial to the post-colonial state in Nyasaland had revolutionary characteristics but some of the personalities involved manifested neo-colonialist tendencies at an early stage.

When Banda's arrival catalysed resistance to the Federation in 1958 the Governor, who was also commander in chief of the armed forces, wrote to London saying that 'disorders were virtually certain in or before 1960 and there would have to be a show down with congress'. The extremist Europeans wanted the police to be put under federal control for greater protection.¹⁰ In order to co-ordinate security during the period a series of intelligence and operations committees were put in place: the Nyasaland Operations Committee, Provincial Operations Committee and the Nyasaland Intelligence Committee. The Nyasaland Operations Committee was made up of the officer commanding the Nyasaland Army, the Commissioner of Police, the Secretary for Agriculture and a staff officer.¹¹ While the Chief Secretary, the Commissioner of Police and the Head of the Special Branch comprised the Intelligence Committee.

The Nyasaland Special Branch liaised closely with the Federal Intelligence Special Branch. From 1954 the Branch drew up so-called 'sunrise lists' that named individuals marked for arrest. These were updated from time to time. It must be noted that these committees were executing colonial government policy formulated by the Nyasaland Federal Government in Harare and the Colonial office in London. Despite the attempted introduction of a few indigenous Malawians into the Legislative Councils at Federal Nyasaland level, policy formulation was motivated by the aims of institutionalising colonial state hegemony, perpetuating perceived African inferiority and undermining the creation of an informed African political community.

Federal and Nyasaland troops were at the forefront of the suppression of the fundamental rights of Africans. Some specific examples from the 1959 State

of Emergency illustrate this. In one incident on 7 February 1959, a KAR company commanded by Captain Caine was confronted by a man who refused to move when ordered to do so. Captain Caine turned the man around and pricked him with a bayonet in the buttock. The police proposed to charge him with bodily harm. However General Garlake, the federal General Officer Commanding, instructed the commander of KAR troops in Nyasaland that if the captain was charged he would withdraw every soldier from Nyasaland. Another case of the shooting of an African by a federal soldier was later reported to the Operations Committee. The Attorney General wanted to prosecute the soldier involved but Roy Welensky, the Federal Prime Minister, threatened to pull out all federal troops. Both cases were dropped.

The Press reflected the thinking of the Federal and colonial authorities. *The Rhodesia Herald* wrote:

“The Forces of law and order must not hesitate to take whatever action is necessary to preserve life and property; they must once and for all put a stop to the criminal activities of those persons who are leading their fellow men into disaster.”¹²

Earlier Welensky had set up an operations room in Salisbury to co-ordinate federation-wide operations and communications and to reinforce the Zomba Battalion of the KAR if necessary. The Government of Nyasaland wrote:

“We are busy co-ordinating the Royal Rhodesian Air Force (RRAF) and military moves if congress ever gets too excited and tries to push things to the point of civil disobedience.”¹³

On 7 February 1959 at a meeting chaired by the Governor where the Chief Secretary Peter Youens, the Attorney General and the Secretary for African Affairs were present, it was concluded that the government would have to rely on the KAR to maintain law and order. However, on 20 February it was decided to send federal troops to Nyasaland. The purpose of this deployment was twofold—to protect life and property and to intimidate through a show of force. From 28 February-1 March federal police reinforcements were brought to Nyasaland and over 3 000 soldiers were brought from Zambia and Zimbabwe. The Provincial Operations Committee made detailed preparations to ensure arrests and to contain any reactions following the arrests.

On 3 March, Banda and other NAC leaders were arrested. Arrests were affected with military precision. The party that arrested the leadership of the nationalist movement in Malawi on 3 March 1959, had 6 distinct groups—Diversionary Group, Assault Group, Snatch Party, Escort Party, Search Group and Support Group—the latter comprised of three platoons from the KAR, commanded by Capt. Caine.¹⁴ During the State of Emergency 1 300 Malawians were detained and over 51 killed. There were 31 women widowed and 68 children orphaned. This

exercise highlighted the dangers of using armed troops in internal security roles.

The Brigade commander for the Northern province requested permission to use RRAF Vampire aircraft against the unarmed civilians,¹⁵ but the foreign office in London would not grant permission. Nevertheless, these aircraft were extensively used, flying low level sorties in a display of force, while dropping pro-federal propaganda leaflets which frightened many African villagers.

Subsequent to Operation Sunrise, as the State of Emergency was code named, a policy of systematic harassment was set in motion by the federal and Nyasaland authorities to break up what they called an existing pattern of intimidation, threat and truculence. This worsened the relations between the military and Africans. Police and the soldiers would go into villages at night, knocking on doors and breaking in if necessary, much like the slave raids and the *Ching'aning'ani* recruitment parties of the First World War. The men were ordered to the centre of the villages and questioned under guard and houses were searched in a rough manner under the pretext of looking for documents and weapons.¹⁶

The security forces were involved extensively in beatings and harassment. The sight of the military was enough to send the local villagers 'off scampering into the bush at lightning speed'.¹⁷ The activities of the Federal and Nyasaland troops were consistent with colonial and imperial policy, designed to reassure the white population that there was a legitimate government in place that would maintain law and order for and protect the property of the Europeans. The presence of federal troops increased the unpopularity of the federal state in the eyes of the three million Africans.¹⁸ Military and colonial objectives were congruent. In that regard civil-military relations were good, but this also highlighted the contradictions that characterised the colonial state.

After Banda was released the Governor, Sir Robert Armitage, resigned his office. He had failed to accomplish the objectives of running the territory as an autonomous entity and maintaining law and order. In addition the foreign office was never convinced of his reasons for imposing the state of emergency. He was replaced by Sir Glyn Jones.

As a sign of recognition that the colonial system was under threat, a deputy to the colonial secretary visited Malawi. During the visit he attended the meetings of the Executive Council, the Nyasaland Operations Committee and the Provincial and District Commissions and met with European politicians. He also met the African and Asian politicians, African civil servants and school teachers, detainees, businessmen, villagers and missionaries. African civil society was beginning to constitute a formidable political community and new centres of political legitimacy were being established.

Throughout the colonial period, from 1880 to 1964, there had never been an African officer in the colonial army. This was deliberate. Those soldiers who joined the military were illiterate as colonial policy used inadequate education

as an instrument of control. However, soldiers were taught the fundamentals of reading and writing. Recruitment into the military was predominantly from Zomba and outlying areas of Blantyre and Mangochi. This was a legacy of the 'slaves' war' and subsequently the wars of pacification in which Europeans supplanted the Arab slave traders. The servicemen's wages brought money into their communities and substituted the profit from the slave trade.

These imperial policies bequeathed to the post colonial Malawian state a military that lacked a well developed indigenous officer corps and that was not adequately representative. This lack of representivity would have been a fundamental weakness that compromised the capacity of the military to perform a national defensive role without manifesting praetorian propensities in a post-colonial Malawian state.

The Malawian post-colonial state between 1964 and 1975

On 6 July 1964 Nyasaland became an independent state. The country was renamed Malawi and the 1st Battalion KAR became the Malawi Army. Earlier I alluded to the fact that the transition to the post-colonial state might have been perceived as a revolution in the sense that there may have been a structural rupture of state institutions. In fact there was continuity both of the structures and functionaries. The commander in chief of the armed forces, the Governor, continued to exercise his command functions and those of head of state for two years into the post-colonial era. The chief secretary, who was also a former member of the Army Council, continued in his function and later became the personal secretary to the first prime minister. This created both structural and socio-political challenges as Malawi's immediate post-independence upheavals would demonstrate.

In the run up to independence there was a great deal of jostling for positions in the post independence republic. Banda, who was a late-comer to the Malawian political scene and who became the first prime minister, was pitted against younger, more militant members of the nationalist movement. There is reason to conclude that, having invited him to return home to help in the nationalist movement, the younger members felt that his usefulness would end with the attainment of independence. There were attempts to make him a ceremonial head of state.

The gradual and constitutional transfer of power from the white executive to a majority African one facilitated closer consultation and convergence of purpose between the British and Banda whose relationship with his younger colleagues was increasingly characterised by non co-operation. The British authorities were concerned with the militancy displayed by some of the

younger leaders who indicated sympathies for international socialism at a time when the ideological divide between east and west was the major issue in international politics. One of the primary younger leaders was charged and sentenced to two years in prison for sedition two years before independence.

Banda started to gather a new cadre of party militants loyal to him, the Malawi Young Pioneers (MYP). He also began to manifest overt egocentrism that further irritated the younger nationalist activists and led to a growing rift in the nationalist movement. On 26 July 1964, on his return from an OAU conference in Cairo, he told the crowd that came to welcome him: "You are my spies, tell me everything you hear".¹⁹ He warned the crowd against strange people who would open embassies and corrupt the people and government with lavish parties and gifts—a reference to the Peoples Republic of China.

On his return from Cairo he was accompanied by his private secretary, Mr. Peter Youens—one of the main colonial operators in the State of Emergency in 1959. His External Affairs Minister did not accompany him. The issue that precipitated Banda's rupture in relations with this Minister, once one of his most trusted lieutenants, was his 'two China' policy. On independence he had invited both the Peoples Republic of China and Taiwan to the celebrations. China had demanded that the invitation to Taiwan be withdrawn but the Prime Minister had refused.

On 4 August 1964, the Malawi Government reinstated the colonial powers of preventive detention.²⁰ On 26 August 1964 Banda was openly confronted by his cabinet over the introduction of fees in hospitals, the slow rate of Africanisation and the low salaries of African civil servants in comparison to their white colleagues. On 8 September, Banda dismissed four cabinet ministers and two others resigned from office. The civil servants supported the cause of the dismissed Ministers. The white officers in the Malawi Army and the Malawi police were virtually spectators in an unfolding drama. The military, under the Governor General as commander in chief, in keeping with the British tradition of non-involvement in politics, remained non-partisan. The Malawi Young Pioneers (MYP), who were loyal to Banda, were the decisive factor in determining the course of events. From then onwards the MYP developed into what Naomi Chazan described as 'a coercive instrument of administrative hegemony'. I will return to the MYP later in the paper.

The independence constitution stipulated the existence of a parliament, an executive authority headed by the Prime Minister, and the creation of an army. The mission of the army was to 'defend Malawi and to be used in the maintenance of law and order'. This mission mirrored that of the colonial force. In many ways the Malawi Army was a continuation of the colonial military, with the same structure and demographics, the same white officers and the same African semi-literate non commissioned officers and soldiers. It was the same force except in name.

An act of parliament was passed in February 1965 that prescribed a framework for the establishment, administration, recruitment, conditions of service, training, command and discipline of the Malawi Army and specified that it would have a regular and a reserve component. The same act also provided for the formation of an Army Council, which was charged with the responsibility of command, discipline and administration but not operations. The composition of the Army council was as follows:

- Minister of Defence—Chairman;
- the Secretary to the President and Cabinet;
- the Army Commander;
- the Deputy Army Commander.

The 1966 constitution stipulated that the president would be commander in chief of the armed forces with powers to appoint the army commander. Parliament was given a regulatory role.

On attestation officers took an oath of allegiance to the established political leadership as a way of fostering civil-military relations. Section 82 of the Army Regulations (Regular Force)(Officers) forbade officers from committing acts that might constitute active participation in politics and from displaying symbols of political significance.

Between 1964 and 1975 the military was influenced by the political intrigues of the time, the ascendancy of the MYP, the introduction of African officers, the recruitment of new and younger educated officers and the international climate. The military had demonstrated neutrality during the cabinet crisis—only patrolling the residential areas—and it was reported that they were well received. The first known deployment of the army in an internal security operation was reported in the *Times* of Friday, November 13, 1964. It was reported that 1 Company of the first battalion and additional police had been sent to Mangochi to restore law and order as there had reportedly been acts of arson, damage to property, intimidation and hooliganism.

The second internal deployment of the military was in 1967. On 29 September 1967 a criminal gang calling itself the 'Group of 21' or '*Ufulu-Umodzi-M'Malawi*' entered the country through the district of Mwanza. The military was deployed. On 9 October 1967 the military engaged the gang, by then was only 17 strong. Nine were captured, three were killed and five escaped. This was a joint army-police operation.

From then onwards, the army was extensively used in ceremonial parades—it was the principal player at the Queen's birthday parades and later at Banda's annual birthday celebration. The army was granted the Freedom of the city of Blantyre on 24 July 1966, where it paraded through the streets. The mayor took the salute. This became an annual exercise that popularised the troops with the residents of the city. The army was granted the Freedom of the

city of Lilongwe in 1982 with the same effect.

During the first decade of independence the army went through significant changes. Recruitment into the military was extended to all districts in the country on a quota basis to address the demographic imbalance inherited from the colonial army. On 28 August 1964, the first Malawian to become an officer was given the rank of lieutenant. Recruitment of young officer cadets was advertised in the print media. In those early days, the Army accepted applications from serving soldiers and junior police officers.²¹ This illustrated the close relationship between the army and the police and bespoke the common origin of the police and army before separation in 1922.

On 14 May 1972 whilst the army was parading before the President on his official birthday, Banda announced that Lieutenant Colonel Matewere was being promoted to the rank of Brigadier and had been appointed army commander. The white former army commander, Brigadier Clements, was given the post of advisor to the army. Banda said that the appointment of an African army commander eight years after attaining independence, marked the completion of his programme of Africanisation. It might be interesting to note that in January 1972, he appointed the first African Secretary to the President and Cabinet and the first African Attorney General.

On 24 May 1972, a South African Airways flight from Harare to Johannesburg was hijacked to Blantyre.²² The army was called upon to assist the Malawi Police to deal with the hijack. The army fired upon the aircraft on the second day of the hijack and the hijackers surrendered. On 26 May 1972, the president announced the promotion of Matewere to the rank of Major General effective from the same date for a job well done.²³

During the first decade of independence the leadership did not manifest ethnocentrism in relation to the management of the security forces. The army commander was from the southern region while the police chief was from the central region. Some senior officers in the military were given sums of money as a way of rewarding merit but it is arguable that this was also a means to buy their loyalty. On attainment of certain ranks some officers were given loans to acquire land for agriculture. The pay structure was de-linked from the rest of the civil service and adjusted upwards. This was done on the basis that military service was an extreme expression of patriotism. These moves epitomise what Huntington calls the 'subjective control mechanisms of the military'.

The Malawi Young Pioneers: 1963 to 1993

The formation of the MYP in 1963 was influenced by the launch of a similar organisation in Ghana. The MYP was a party militia, trained by the Israelis whose methods reflected the socialist characteristics of the Israeli Kibbutz system. The slow pace of Africanisation delayed the emergence of resentment in

the military against the influence of the MYP. On completion of the first leadership course of the MYP on 16 May 1964, Banda gave the reason for the formation of the MYP. He was reported to have said that every young man in Malawi would undergo military training. He promised to develop a training establishment in which mechanics, agriculture and even flying would be taught. Of the MYPs role as a tool of political indoctrination, he said: 'When I was here last October [1963] the young pioneers were in a mess. There was no discipline and they thought they had nothing to do with the Malawi congress party[...]'.²⁴ Banda pledged that the MYP would defend the nation if necessary, protect women and children and would be obliged to conform to a new doctrine of 'Paramountcy of State and the Malawi Nation'.

On 31 October 1964, again speaking at a graduation of pioneers, he said that he wanted 'tractors and rifles' for the MYP—tractors to till the soil and rifles to defend the nation. He also said that all countries train their citizens to defend themselves not only through standing armies but by organising the citizens themselves, as with the territorial force in Britain. He said that where people find the MYP they find soldiers. He further announced that he intended to procure 1,000 rifles and that some of those had already been obtained—indeed the pioneers paraded with their rifles on that day.²⁵

The MYP was the president's most favoured organization—it became an auxiliary organ of the presidency, subordinated to the president alone. Its main purpose was to ensure that everyone conformed to party policy and in doing so it became increasingly secretive and militarised. At a ceremony marking the end of an MYP course in August 1969 at Mountain View, the training and operations officer of the movement said that those trained at Amalika, another training base, concentrated on agriculture while those trained at Mountain View concentrated on 'other aspects of the movement'. He was referring to the military dimension of their training.

Closing ceremonies of MYP training programmes in almost every district were well attended by senior party functionaries and widely reported in the press. The constant theme of the speeches was a call for the MYP to go back to the villages to fight the three deadly enemies—ignorance, disease and poverty. Pioneers were also routinely requested to help the president in his efforts to develop the country and were advised to uphold the four values upon which the party and government were built namely obedience, loyalty, discipline and unity.

The State introduced Youth Week Programmes. One week a year, usually the first week of April, was dedicated to voluntary manual work by the youth and later older people also joined in. The first opening ceremony was held on 31 March 1968, at Zomba.²⁶ All subsequent opening ceremonies featured an impressive array of agricultural products and military displays by youth that were reminiscent of the youth mobilization in Nazi Germany or the socialist

countries of East Asia. It was the secondary and primary school pupils and university students who put on these displays in the major urban centres. The displays were meticulously rehearsed under the watchful eye of Israeli and Malawian MYP instructors. The Youth Week Programmes and the grand ceremonies continued until 1992.

The MYP's military agenda was reflected in its rapid expansion. On 16 September 1968 it was announced that the Government had brought into service an MYP patrol boat on Lake Malawi, at a time when the defence force had no naval craft.²⁷ On a visit to Israel the same year the president was taken to an aircraft factory to purchase aircraft for the MYP²⁸ and in 1970 the MYP took delivery of its first aircraft. Three pilots of the MYP were awarded their wings on 4 November 1971 at a hotel in Blantyre. At the time the standing defence force had no aircraft.

The MYP was a disciplined organisation in the sense that it was run through a rigid military code of conduct and operated within party political ideological confines. The MYP became an instrument of ideological indoctrination into Kamuzuism, as Banda's personal philosophy became known. All entrants into the military had had some exposure to Kamuzuism as every secondary school had an MYP instructor responsible for physical education and some primary school teachers attended leadership courses in MYP bases. In December 1971 a group of 14 teachers, on completion of their youth leadership course, were advised to inculcate into their pupils the four cornerstone values listed previously.²⁹

The MYP instructor became a feared individual in any educational institution. Perceived acts of ill discipline by either the students or teachers in his reports were acted upon without verification. During the school holidays some elected students were sent to MYP bases for three to four week leadership courses. Among other things the students were taught MYP standing orders and discipline.

The members of the mainstream MYP were recruited from all districts of the country and trained in 21 different bases.³⁰ Those who demonstrated leadership qualities were rewarded with training programmes abroad. Others were promoted to positions of influence within the movement. Those with good school certificates were admitted to the University of Malawi, the only public university, while others were admitted into teacher training colleges, nursing schools, agricultural institutions and automotive trade and artisan courses. On completion of their study programmes some returned to the movement but others were employed in public and private institutions and formed an intelligence network across Malawian society. Pioneers were also deployed to guard government buildings, performing an administrative police function.

The MYP underwent some limited disarmament in 1973 and again in 1980. The period 1973 to 1980 was characterised by the decline of the MYP's influ-

ence, arising from the incarceration of influential political leaders with direct dealings with the MYP. At the same time the influence of the military grew. In 1978, the MYP lost its marine unit to the army and the helicopter section it established was also transferred to the army. Subsequently the MYP lost its air wing to the Police.

From around 1984 the MYP's influence was again on the ascendance and it constituted a counterweight to the military. Its duties were expanded to include presidential security. The president had two men in uniform with him all the time—one was the military aide de camp, the other an MYP officer. The majority of the staff at the state houses were pioneers.

In 1985 there was an attempt to turn the MYP into an overt military organisation along the lines of the army, a departure from the territorial concept as stipulated by the president in 1964. Their rank structure was militarised with their commander holding the rank of Lieutenant General. However, the army resented this move and when the media began to carry reports of majors, colonels and brigadiers from the MYP addressing political party meetings, the authorities became uneasy. The MYP then discontinued the use of military ranks.

The declining importance of ideology in the early 1990s as a result of the end of the Cold War undermined the notion of the supremacy of nation states. The state's claim to sovereignty became politically and legally more ambiguous. The paramountcy of the state and nation became open to challenge and this heightened the vulnerabilities of state institutions in Malawi including the MYP. The international community got frustrated at Malawi's unwillingness to adopt liberal democratic practice at a time when many African countries had done so. The West found a potent weapon for manipulation in the provision of economic aid to Malawi. The MYP as an institution that derived its *raison d'être* from defending the president against political enemies became less effective in this new environment. When the Malawi Congress Party, the ruling party, lost the multiparty referendum on 14 June 1993, the MYP that had vigorously campaigned in favour of the one party system through intimidation and mobilisation, felt vulnerable.

Prior to the referendum, inter-party dialogue existed through joint meetings of the Presidential Committee on Dialogue formed by the president and the Public Affairs Committee (PAC), an umbrella body of religious and business groups. After the referendum the Presidential Committee on Dialogue and the PAC formed the National Consultative Council (NCC) that had a strong influence on the National Assembly and the Executive. The NCC, the most effective forum for managing the transition, resolved to have the MYP delinked from the ruling party and its members absorbed into either the police or the army. The pioneers became increasingly hostile to the army as they sought to maintain the status quo.

On 1 December 1993 pioneers deliberately shot and killed two soldiers in Mzuzu after a disagreement at a local drinking place. When a senior official of the MYP, speaking on the BBC, said that the MYP were preparing to deal with any reaction from the army, the conflict erupted. On the morning of 3 December the army attacked the MYP headquarters and the ruling party headquarters adjacent to it. This was an act of rebellion but technically it was legitimate since the NCC, the only credible body at the time, had called for the dissolution of the MYP. In order to provide a safety valve for the unfolding conflict Banda, who was also commander in chief of both the army and the MYP, announced on state radio that the disarmament of the MYP that the NCC had called for, was underway. He urged the MYP not to resist.

After the pioneers had been completely disarmed, they were demobilised. In discussions between the military and the civil authorities immediately after the disarmament, it was decided to establish a Ministry of Defence to ensure effective communication between the two bodies. Changes were also made in the leadership of the military. At legislative level the act of parliament that created the MYP was repealed.

The MYP was designed to exist as a distinct political body and there was no fusion of army and MYP functions in common institutions. MYP intelligence operatives kept dossiers on every army officer, but the MYP's failure to collaborate with the police special branch, against a background of institutional rivalry, meant that this intelligence had little practical effect.

The MYP was not as successful as it had been intended to be as an instrument for achieving national unity, judging by the country's consciousness of sub-national and regional identities. This was reflected in the voting patterns in the referendum of 1993 and General Election of 1994, where the glaring divisions along regional and ethnic fault lines gave substance to this conclusion. Some of the MYP's high-handed tactics in pursuing party agendas earned it more enemies than friends. An initial success in enhancing agricultural output was compromised by its preoccupation with state security functions. This was evidenced by the closure of many of the agricultural schemes that had been established by the pioneers, and the dwindling levels of food production countrywide. The MYP did however have a presence of party loyal cadres in almost every village at minimum cost. In this regard, Malawi was one of the most militarised countries in Africa despite a generally held belief to the contrary.

The military: 1980 to 1993

We have noted that civil-military relations were relatively harmonious between 1970 and 1978, a period which saw the formation of the Malawi Army Air Wing, the Naval Unit and the transfer of helicopter pilots and marine personnel from the MYP to the army. From 1980 the army enjoyed significant sup-

port from the civil authorities. A civilian VIP aircraft that had been operated by the former MYP pilots was sold and the presidential jet that was purchased to replace the aircraft was transferred to the army to operate. On 9 April 1980, the first African commander of the Malawi Army retired and a younger officer with no linkage to the colonial military was appointed. He too continued to enjoy good relations with the civil authorities.

However 1983 was a watershed in the country's civil-military relations. On 14 May, his official birthday, Banda made a public speech emphasising the importance of discipline, particularly in the army, the MYP and the Youth League. He added that anyone who did not want discipline should 'get out'.³¹ A few days later, stories started circulating relating to the disappearance and death of three cabinet ministers and a member of parliament.

This incident dealt civil military relations in Malawi a serious blow. The public was furious that the military had failed to fulfill its role as public protector. Strong military leadership was required to prevent a very serious rupture in civil-military relations. The commission of inquiry that was set up to investigate the circumstances under which the politicians died found that the actual killing was done by Police Intelligence services and Police Mobile Force (PMF). The subsequent trial of former president Banda seemed to indicate his complicity in the mysterious deaths. However the trial, known as the Mwanza Murder Case, found him not guilty and he was acquitted in December 1995. Soon after the deaths of the four politicians in 1983, serious hostility developed between the army and the police especially among junior officers and soldiers. Relations between the senior officers were more cosmetic. In 1986 there were running battles between soldiers and policemen in Lilongwe sparked by an incident at a football match. One soldier sustained gun shot wounds and two junior officers were dismissed.

The most significant development during the 1980s and early 1990s was related to the war in Mozambique, where the then Renamo rebels (before the Rome Peace Agreement and its transformation into a legitimate political party) were stepping up operations against the government. In 1986 the Government of Malawi had signed an agreement with the Mozambique Government to contribute to the security of the Nacala Railway corridor. To fulfill this obligation, the Government proposed to beef up the army with the MYP pioneers, but the army declined.

The army was duly deployed in Mozambique, the first time since colonialism that it had been deployed outside Malawi's borders. Troops remained in Mozambique for six years, withdrawing in January 1993. During this time, the army had acquired some combat experience with its many encounters with Renamo fighters in difficult terrain.

After the army's withdrawal from Mozambique, civil-military relations again became strained, partly because of tension with the MYP, which had had

a free hand during the military's deployment in Mozambique from 1987 to 1993. By this stage, the Banda regime's legitimacy had been further eroded by the withdrawal of development aid and international recognition, and civil society—especially the church—was also challenging its legitimacy.

When the government lost the referendum, *de facto* legitimacy passed to the newly established National Consultative Council.

Civil-military relations since 1994

The army's popularity soared with the disarmament of the MYP and perceived threats from the pioneers were not actualised. The army had in fact encouraged the Government to affect an orderly dissolution of the MYP and to facilitate the reintegration of pioneers into society. During the disarmament exercise there were a few isolated incidents that did not reflect well on the military or the police.

On 2 February 1994 a university lecturer was killed in a fight with two soldiers at Zomba community centre bar.³² University students registered their concern over the lecturer's death with a peaceful march to the mortuary. Then on 24 February two soldiers in uniform, who had been on leave during the peak of the crisis, robbed a man in Lilongwe of his hi-fi system and a few domestic items. They were sentenced to 12 years each in prison. Two policemen armed with an R4 rifle robbed a chain store in Lilongwe and were sentenced to eight years each in jail.³³ There were also other incidents: a soldier attacked a truck delivering soft drinks and a policeman shot a man at a bar in an armed robbery. These cases of ill discipline give substance to the contention that the military is not a homogeneous entity and that there are some criminal elements ready to exploit situations of crisis.

As a further reflection of the crisis there was a report of a planned military coup. On 1 April 1994 Mr Sudi Sulaimana was arrested, ostensibly for circulating anonymous letters in collusion with five serving and retired soldiers, including a retired major and a retired sergeant, with a view to overthrowing the Government.³⁴ This was the first of Sulaiman's two alleged coup plots. This was six weeks before the first multiparty elections.

The most significant event took place on 19 April 1995 when the commander of the defence force was killed by suspected car thieves on his way from Blantyre to Lilongwe. The suggested motives for the murder ranged from robbery to anger at the commander's praetorian propensities. It is believed however that the incident was linked to a reported coup plot by Lt. Col. Njoloma, who immediately went into hiding when news of the General's death was announced. Five soldiers were arrested and Njoloma handed himself over two months later. They were all charged, found guilty and given sentences ranging from two to 15 years. The irony was that the officer who went

into hiding had sought political protection to avoid dismissal from the army for manifest lack of discipline, soon after the first multiparty election. Lt Col Njoloma and most of his alleged accomplices have since died in prison.

Current mechanisms of civilian control of the military

Civilian control of the Malawi military in the multi-party system has been explicitly premised on five factors. These are: supremacy of civilian executive control, military professionalism, constitutional and legal constraints, bi-partisan consensus on defence and effective legitimate governance.³⁵ Section 160 of the new Malawi constitution stipulates that the defence force shall operate under the direction of civil authorities. The constitution articulates the mission of the defence force as being to uphold sovereignty and territorial integrity, uphold and protect the constitutional order, provide technical expertise and resources to the civil authorities and perform duties outside Malawi when required. The constitution also stipulates the executive authority of the defence force shall vest with the president who will be commander in chief. A defence Council includes the Minister of Defence and the military high command.

The constitution also provides for the establishment of a Defence and Security Committee of the National Assembly to ensure bi-partisan oversight of the defence force and to reinforce the role of parliament for legislative and legal actions in relation to the military. Parliament is the ultimate authority for the approval of prolonged use of the military but the president may deploy the armed forces without parliamentary approval. The president, in his capacity as commander in chief, appoints and removes senior officers, including the army commander.

However the constitution is flawed in that it does not make a clear distinction between the executive control bodies for policy and general guidelines for the military and parliamentary bodies to ensure accountability. The constitution also lacks consistency in its terminology, for example referring to an army council for the defence force. The composition of the army council is not specified nor its functions stipulated. Nor are the functions of the Defence and Security Committee clearly outlined. Furthermore, the committee of parliament does not actually exist.

Defence policy

In 1995, in order to address some of these shortcomings, the Minister of Defence proposed the formulation of a defence policy among other things, to provide a policy framework for the military. The proposed defence policy paper stated that the President would appoint the defence force commander

taking into account experience, a balanced career development path, staff command and instruction experience and of course loyalty.

The Ministry of Defence would be under a minister who would manage the ministry within policy guidelines set by the executive. The principal secretary would be the chief accounting officer of the ministry and the head of the civilian staff and adviser to the minister on matters of policy. The ministry would establish an office of public relations to deal with the print and electronic media.

The draft policy also stipulated that the chief of the defence force would be the highest ranking officer who would be responsible for the day to day running of the military department. The chief would also be the chief advisor to the minister, the commander in chief and the government on military matters. The draft policy paper also proposed the formation of new bodies to strengthen executive control mechanisms: the National Security Council, National Command Authority and the National Intelligence Organisation.

The National Security Council, which would handle all security matters on behalf of cabinet, would comprise the president (chairman), the ministers of defence, home affairs, foreign affairs and finance, the chief of the defence force, and the head of the National Intelligence Organization. Foreign Affairs was included because there was a close relationship between foreign policy and defence policy, while home affairs was included as a recognition of the changing perception of security brought about by economic stagnation, unemployment, environmental degradation and loss of state monopoly on the use of violence. This has accentuated the interconnectedness of the external and internal dimensions of security and the need for the military to play a supportive role to the police to counter the increasing sophistication and firepower of criminal gangs.

The National Command Authority (NCA) would be the supreme authority for the execution of operations in National Emergencies. The composition of the NCA would be: the president as chairman, the minister of defence, the chief of the defence force and any other members who might be co-opted. The National Intelligence Organisation would be composed of the heads of intelligence, of the police and the army and any other duly appointed civilian.

Malawi army's international role

The introduction of multi-party politics in Malawi, the demilitarisation of the political system through the disarmament of the MYP and the army's refusal to accept calls from the civil society to assume total political control for a limited duration during the transition, won it international recognition.

For the first time in the country's history the Malawi Government was invited to send troops on United Nations peacekeeping missions and, in March 1994, the army sent military observers to Rwanda. After the Rwanda

massacres of 1994 Malawi was requested to contribute troops to the United Nations peacekeeping force for Rwanda–UNAMIR, whose mandate ran from October 1993 to 8 March 1996. The Malawian peacekeepers joined UNAMIR in August 1994.

As part of UNAMIR, the Malawian troops acted as an intermediary between the warring parties, assisted in the resumption of humanitarian relief operations and monitored the safety and security of civilians. After the cease-fire the troops assisted in monitoring and stabilising the situation in all regions of Rwanda, in establishing security for human rights officers and also in facilitating the safe and voluntary return of refugees.

After the Angolan peace agreement of 1994 known as the Lusaka Accord, the Malawi government was also invited to send troops but was not able to do so due to overstretched resources. On conclusion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) air war over Kosovo in 1999, the Malawi army sent an observer to join the UN team. It later sent 10 observers to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as part of the UN peacekeeping force to oversee the implementation of the peace agreement between the DRC government and the rebels.

In 1994 the Malawi army was admitted into the Interstate Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC), a substructure of the former frontline states and now of the Southern African Development Community (SADC)³⁶. Malawi also participated in SADC's Exercise Blue Hungwe in Zimbabwe in April 1997. The aim of the exercise being to enhance regional liaison, co-operation, military skills and interoperability by means of a multinational joint field training exercise in the tactics and techniques of international peacekeeping.³⁷ In 1999 the Army participated in Exercise Blue Crane in South Africa, whose aim was again enhancement of sub-regional capacity in peace support operations under the auspices of the UN.

As part of SADC, Malawi has participated in various meetings and conferences of the ISDSC and its sub-committees. In October 1996 Malawi hosted the annual ISDSC meeting—a reflection of its regional recognition, and from 25 to 27 September 1996, it hosted a meeting of the African Leadership Forum—which included senior military and former military personnel.

The Malawi army has also participated in the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI) training programme, a United States-designed programme to enhance peace support and humanitarian operations capacity among African states. The programme is designed to operate in a multinational setting at battalion level.

In 1998 some of Malawian paratroopers trained with French paratroopers in Madagascar, and the French paratroopers came to train with the Malawi army in 1999, as part of French initiatives to develop African capacities for peace support operations. The Malawi army also sent two helicopters to Mozambique on

27 February 2000 to join in regional and international humanitarian efforts in response to floods.

Invitations from the United Nations to contribute troops for peace support operations are a manifestation of the international community's recognition of the Malawi army's professionalism, epitomized by its comportment during the transitional period to liberal democracy. The Malawi Defence Force's interactive, co-operative relationships with other defence forces within the Southern African sub-region or elsewhere in Africa constitute Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) which have a strong impact in enhancing regime security and diminishing the military influence on domestic politics in a wider regional framework.

The Malawi army is one of the few in Africa that has not intervened in government. Through its international and regional commitments it also demonstrated that it is a cohesive, well balanced and representative military that is neither politicised nor predominantly mono-ethnic (or sub-national). This has been achieved in part through sound recruitment and human resource development policies and practices.

Humanitarian assistance

The Malawi Army has engaged in humanitarian operations as part of the government's disaster relief effort over the years. The most notable crises were the Phalombe flash floods and the Lower Shire floods. On 11 March 1991 over eighty people were confirmed dead and many others were reported missing when flash floods swept over Phalombe District.³⁸ Army helicopters and engineers were tasked to deliver emergency relief assistance to the victims and reopen the road network. A leading academic and news editor reported:

“Chiringa is only accessible from Phalombe by helicopter[...] Malawi Army Helicopters are making shuttle trips between Phalombe and Nambiti, flying in relief supplies to victims[...].”³⁹

In April 1997 the Lower Shire was hit by the worst floods in 100 years. The Commissioner for Disaster Relief and Management asked the army's helicopters to fly in relief supplies to victims. The helicopters flew sorties from sunrise to sunset due to the magnitude of the problem and the limited airlift capacity. The know-how developed in these operations served the helicopter crews well when they were sent to Mozambique in February 2000.

Army engineers were involved in rehabilitating bridges and roads in the Lower Shire, Zomba and other areas from 1995-1998, as part of an attempt to define a new developmental role for the army in the service of the Malawian society.

Relations with the media

The defence establishment in Malawi has set up information offices at the Ministry of Defence and at Army Headquarters. These offices aim to provide the public with the information it may require related to defence on a regular basis.

Though media-military relations have generally been good in Malawi, there have been some incidents of non co-operation, as highlighted by discussions at a seminar in Lilongwe on 16 March 2000. One media house reminded the army of an incident where soldiers sabotaged equipment and furniture in a news-room after the newspaper published an article on HIV/Aids statistics in the armed forces. However the journalists acknowledged that the situation improved tremendously with the establishment of the public relations offices. The army complained that the media does not want to inform the nation of positive developments in the military and highlights negative, sensational stories.

Career development and civil-military relations

Civil-military relations cannot be achieved through the formation of legal, objective instruments for the institutionalisation of civilian supremacy alone. Sound human resource recruitment, development and management practices that are responsive to national and sub-national diversities are imperative. These diversities must be synergised to achieve representivity, cohesion and the institutionalisation of a democratic culture within the military.

The post-colonial military is not homogenous. There are significant stratifications on the basis of age, rank and recruitment. For the past five years members of parliament have expressed dissatisfaction with the army's recruitment campaigns, claiming that there are no recruits from certain areas. However, the official policy is designed to achieve representivity via quotas allocated for various districts. Whatever the underlying factors for the concerns of these parliamentarians, they may lead to the creation of distortions in the career development programmes of the army.

To deal with the subject of civil-military relations through parliamentary oversight and executive control mechanisms alone would be to treat the symptoms and not look for the cause. In Malawi at national level there are regional tendencies, while at regional level there are ethnic rivalries that are currently submerged in the regional administrative structure. Within the same ethnic groups there are also some clan or area rivalries. It is therefore insufficient to address these sensitivities at regional level within the military, as professionalism at all levels will be negatively affected by these rivalries.

Conclusion

I have attempted to argue in this essay that the study of civil-military relations in post-colonial societies will be meaningful only if we take into account the pre-colonial era. Successive conquests in the Nyasaland area beginning with the slave-trading Arabs, followed by the Ngoni, then the missionaries and colonialists, whilst being ruptures in the prevalent social order at their time were characterised by continuities. The understanding of these continuities is essential in developing workable civil-military relations structures that take on board the evolution of African cultures. In the same vein, in the transition from colonial to post-colonial systems there were also continuities, in that many of the imperial and colonial structures and systems remained. Hence civil-military relations have been rendered vulnerable to new challenges arising out of weak local political accountability.

The Malawi constitutional transition to post-colonial governance was violently terminated with the cabinet crisis of September 1964. That crisis was a consequence of contradictions between traditional beliefs in the leadership of elders and the youth activism that led to independence. The consolidation of Banda's rule was achieved under a neocolonial umbrella fed on the east-west superpower security environment. In this regard the slow and gradual Africanisation of the civil-service and the military was aimed at creating a subservient military free of anti-western ideological propensities, whilst at the same time a party militia loyal to Banda was set up to counter the influence of the military. Civil-military relations during the 30 years of one party rule were informed by tensions between the MYP and a small military.

In the course of the paper I have shown how the military advanced colonial and imperial policies during the 75 years of colonial rule in Malawi. I have demonstrated that the interface between the Africans and the colonial military was characterised by fear issuing from the colonial belief that force was the only civilising instrument. I have also shown that the use of incidental force and structural force created divisions between the traditional authorities and their subjects that later excluded the traditional authorities from playing a leadership role in the fight to destroy colonialism.

In the post-colonial system, Malawian society was one of the most militarised in Southern Africa as the MYP gave expression to the regime's preoccupation with its own security. However, an over preoccupation with regime security can lead civil authorities to make one single blunder that undermines civil-military relations and ultimately leads to the collapse of the regime itself, as was the case in Malawi in 1983 and the subsequent collapse in 1993.

This paper has examined the development and management of human resources in the Malawi army. I have observed that the post-colonial government inherited a military whose national demographic portfolio reflected the imperial policy of divide and rule. I have further alluded to the fact that the

immediate military leadership displayed an anti-intellectualism that reflected its origins as a colonial non-commissioned officer corps whose education was sub-standard by imperial design.

I have further shown that the past human resource management policies were deficient as they never adequately prepared retirees for integration into society either as employees or even as self-employed entrepreneurs, an oversight that militates against optimal civil-military relations.

I have also discussed the Malawi military's participation in international and regional peace support and humanitarian operations and training programmes as a cause and effect of its international recognition. This recognition was helped by the army's professionalism demonstrated during the disarmament of the MYP.

In conclusion, the creation of harmonious civil-military relations is not only premised on the existence of what Huntington has called the objective, legalistic, mechanistic control instruments of parliamentary and executive organs alone, but also the employment of subtle subjective instruments that facilitate those mechanistic processes. After all, all nations of the world have those legalistic instruments but the political and professional will to make them work is what makes the difference.

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